



The Healthy Colorado Youth Alliance

Colorado's Healthy Youth Act, House Bill 07-1292 Fact Sheet

In May 2007, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter signed into law House Bill 07-1292, "A Bill For An Act Concerning The Adoption Of Science-Based Content Standards For Instruction Regarding Human Sexuality." This law prioritizes adolescent health by setting a standard for comprehensive sexuality education as an effective strategy to reduce the risk of pregnancy, abortion, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, among young people.

In Colorado, comprehensive health education is optional. All Colorado district schools, institutes, and charter schools can decide whether or not to teach sexuality education, and may address the subject in preschool through 12th grade. The Healthy Youth Act of 2007, HB 07-1292, directs that wherever offered, sexuality education must be science-based, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, medically accurate, and address the topics of abstinence and contraception, including emergency contraception. Parents receive notice of this instruction so that they have the opportunity to begin or continue conversations about sexuality before their student receives classroom instruction – and, ideally, before they need it.

HB 07-1292 sets minimum requirements for school district curriculum on human sexuality, including:

- Encourage parental involvement and family communication;
- Emphasize abstinence as the only certain and most effective way to avoid pregnancy and STIs;
- Teach students about STIs including but not limited to HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and the link between the human papilloma virus and cervical cancer;
- Develop student skills for making responsible and healthy choices about sexual activity, personal power, boundary setting, and resisting peer pressure, including how to avoid:
 - Unwanted verbal, physical, and sexual advances;
 - Making unwanted verbal, physical, and sexual advances; and
 - Making assumptions about a person's supposed sexual intentions based on that person's appearance;
- Explain how being under the influence of drugs or alcohol can impair a student's ability to make healthy choices;
- Be age appropriate, culturally sensitive, and medically accurate, according to published authorities relied on by the medical profession;
- Explain the health benefits and potential side effects of using contraceptives and barrier methods, including emergency contraception and the availability of contraception, to prevent pregnancy and STIs.

When delivered accurately and with fidelity, comprehensive sexuality education helps youth delay the initiation of sexual intimacy and be safe when they choose to become sexually active. The evidence continues to show that youth who receive science-based comprehensive sexuality education at home and at school:

1. Remain abstinent and delay the onset of sexual activity;
2. Increase correct and consistent use of condoms and contraceptives;
3. Reduce the number of sexual encounters, and
4. Reduce the number of sexual partners.

Comprehensive sexuality education includes accurate information on abstinence AND the benefits of the correct and consistent use of condoms and contraceptives, and is science-based, age-appropriate, culturally relevant – and effective!

For more information, please visit our website: healthycoloradoyouth.org.

Informed youth. Responsible decisions. Healthy lives.